

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIBREV 00245 301806Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 CU-04 HA-05 /072 W

-----090683 301855Z /50

P R 301645Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0234

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0245

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GB

SUBJECT: STUDENT UNREST

1. UNCHARACTERISTIC AND UNPRECEDENTED POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS
AGAINST INCREASES IN FEES BY STUDENTS AT MAIN LIBREVILLE CAMPUS
UNIVERSITY GABON ARE NOW IN THIRD DAY. THE UNIVERSITY AND SURROUNDING

AREA HAVE BEEN CORDONED OFF BY RIOT POLICE, MILITARY AND FIRE
ENGINES BUT THUS FAR THERE HAVE BEEN NO CLASHES BETWEEN STUDENTS AND
SECURITY FORCES.

2. DISCONTENT IS FOCUSED ON RECENT INCREASES IN FOOD AND LODGING
COST AT UNIVERSITY DORMITORIES. ALTHOUGH SCHOLARSHIPS TOO WERE
INCREASED, STUDENTS SUFFERED NET LOSS OF 600 CFA (ABOUT \$25)
PER MONTH. THEY WERE ALREADY UNHAPPY WITH CONDITIONS THEY FELT TO
BE SUBSTANDARD AND FELT THEY WOULD MERELY BE PAYING MORE MONEY FORMORE

OF THE SAME. ALTHOUGHT SIMILAR MANIFESTATIONS OF STUDENT DISCONTENT
OCCUR AT LEAST ONCE EACH YEAR AT UNIVERSITY, THIS FIRST YEAR IN
ANYONE'S RECENT MEMORY WHERE SLOGANS AND PLACARDS HAVE CRITICIZED
PRESIDENT BONGO AND OTHER HIGH GOVERNMENT FIGURES BY NAME. MOST
NOTABLE AMONG THE LATTER IS MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, JEAN-BONIFACE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIBREV 00245 301806Z

ASSELE, WHO ALSO WIELDS POWER AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL
POLICE AND AS JOSEPHINE BONGO'S BROTHER. THE STUDENTS
APPARENTLY SUSPECT ASSELE OF POCKETING THE ROOM AND BOARD
MONEY WHICH IN SOME CASES HAS INCREASED FROM ABOVE \$10 PER
MONTH TO MORE THAN \$60 FOR A ROOM. REPRESENTATIVE PLACARDS
CARRY SLOGANS SUCH AS "TEN YEARS OF BONGO MISERY," "DOWN

WITH BONGO AND ASSELE," "BONGO MAUVAIS" AND CRITICIZES THE HUGE AMOUNTS "WASTED" ON OAU CONFERENCE GROUNDS.

3. THE PROTEST STARTED SATURDAY EVENINGWHILE PRESIDENT BONGO WAS OUT OF GABON ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO WEST GERMANY. WHEN HE RETURNED TO LIBREVILLE SUNDAY MORNING HIS PRINCIPAL SECURITY CHIEFS WENT ON BOARD HIS PLANE TO BRIEF HIM ABOUT THE SITUATION BEFORE HE DESEMBARKED. IN THE SUBSEQUENT PRESS CONFERENCE BONGO MADE ONLY AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO ELEMENTS WHO REFUSED TO SUPPORT MEASURES UNDERTAKEN WITHIN HIS AUSTERITY PROGRAM. THERE HAS BEEN NO OTHER PUBLIC NEWS COVERAGE. ALTHOUGH HEADCRACKING HAD NOT BEGUN BY LATE AFTERNOON JANUARY 30, MANY OBSERVERS PREDICT THAT THE POLICE WILL ENTER THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS WITH CONFRONTATIONS INEVITABLY RESULTING SOON. THIS IS SPECULATION BASED PRIMARILY ON THE

SIZE AND NUMBERS OF SECURITY ELEMENTS AROUND THE UNIVERSITY AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE QUARTIER IS BEING CLOSED TO ALL TRAFFIC. YATES

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIBREV00245
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780044-0680
Format: TEL
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978018/aaaaagrq.tel
Line Count: 80
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9ea5eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3799755
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STUDENT UNREST
TAGS: PINT, GB
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9ea5eae4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014